

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are now present in this application.

The specification and claim 1 have been amended. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Page 8 of the specification has been objected to for a certain informality. Because this informality has now been addressed, it is respectfully requested that this objection now be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Because the word "type" no longer appears in claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection should now be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by OKUMOTO, U.S. Patent 4,635,648. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over OKUMOTO in view of Japanese document 61-224977. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention provides for a shredded tobacco supply apparatus of a cigarette manufacturing machine. This apparatus is capable of reducing exposure of shredded tobacco to air, as well as

the fragmentation thereof, and also ensuring constant-rate supply of the shredded tobacco.

To achieve the object, the supply apparatus of the present invention includes a deposition chute. The deposition chute includes an inlet adjoining the upper end of the ascending conveyor, and a pendent passage downwardly extending from the inlet straight to the lower end thereof.

With the deposition chute, the shredded tobacco densely deposits into the pendent passage of the deposition chute, smoothly descends straight down along the deposition chute, and supply to the feed roller unit.

Consequently, the exposure of the shredded tobacco to air inside the deposition chute as well as fragmentation of the shredded tobacco can be reduced. This will ensure a constant-rate supply of the shredded tobacco by the feed roller unit.

Neither the OKUMOTO reference nor the Japanese '977 document includes an element which corresponds to the deposition chute of the present invention. As set forth in claim 1, this deposition chute is capable of receiving the shredded tobacco from the ascending conveyor and depositing the received shredded tobacco. This deposition chute includes an inlet adjoining the upper end of the ascending conveyor and a pendent passage downwardly extending from the inlet straight to a lower end thereof, as noted above. Neither the OKUMOTO nor Japanese document disclose such a chute and

therefore do not have the advantages of the present invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the 35 USC 102(b) and 103 rejections now be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

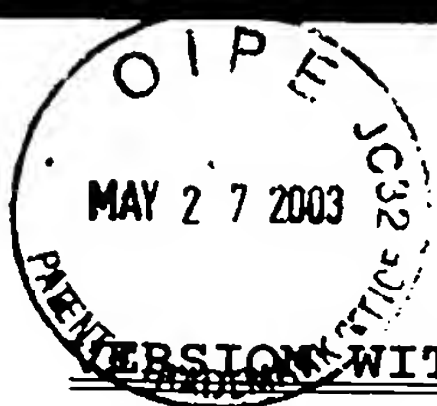
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By Joe McKinney Muncy
Joe McKinney Muncy, #B2,334

KM/asc
1131-0461P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made



VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE
IN THE SPECIFICATION:

A paragraph has been added after the paragraph ending on page 6, line 26.

A paragraph has been added after the heading beginning on page 6, line 28.

The paragraph beginning on page 7, line 33, has been amended as follows:

--On the other hand, a chimney 10 is located right under the tobacco band [2] 1. As mentioned later, the shredded tobacco in the hopper 5 is introduced into the chimney 10 and blown up in the chimney 10 toward the tobacco band 1. Accordingly, the blown-up shredded tobacco is attracted in a layer to the lower surface of the tobacco band 1, whereupon a shredded tobacco layer (not shown) is formed on the tobacco band 1. As seen from FIG. 1, the respective chimneys 10 of the two tobacco feeders 4 are located adjacent to each other in the traveling direction of the tobacco band 1.--

A paragraph has been added after the paragraph ending on page 17, line 4.

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A shredded tobacco supply apparatus of a cigarette manufacturing machine, said supply apparatus comprising a tobacco feeder, said tobacco feeder including
a reservoir stored with shredded tobacco,

an ascending conveyor capable of receiving the shredded tobacco from said reservoir and transferring the shredded tobacco upward,

a deposition chute capable of receiving the shredded tobacco from said ascending conveyor and depositing the received shredded tobacco, said deposition chute including an inlet adjoining an upper end of said ascending conveyor and a pendent passage extending downwardly from the inlet straight to a lower end thereof,

a feed roller unit [of a constant-rate supply type] for delivering the shredded tobacco from the lower end of said deposition chute at a constant supply rate,

acceleration means for accelerating the shredded tobacco delivered from said feed roller unit without using pneumatic pressure, and

pneumatic transportation means for transporting the shredded tobacco accelerated by [means of] said acceleration means, along with an air current, toward a tobacco band of said cigarette manufacturing machine,

said pneumatic transportation means including a chimney for guiding the shredded tobacco and the air current toward the tobacco band, the chimney inclining at an angle to the traveling direction of the tobacco band.